

DOES REAGAN WANT THE RING?

Nicaragua is a land of fog to most Americans. Looking down from our Walhalla--Reagan's "shining city on the hill"--it's hard to tell the heroes from the villains. To Reagan, it's simple: Freedom Fighters vs. Terrorists, Communists vs. Christians. But his "Freedom Fighters" are committing atrocities daily, and his "Communists" are overwhelmingly Christian. What price will Walhalla pay for intervening in the land of fog?

The Senate wants to spend \$38 million in 1985/86 to help overthrow the Nicaraguan government. Congress seems to be swallowing the notion that logistical support of Contra military attacks can be called "humanitarian aid." Reagan and his cabinet have vowed to do "whatever it takes" to change Nicaragua's legally elected government, which includes backing the Contras in their efforts to overthrow the Sandanistas. 70% of the American people oppose all U.S. efforts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government (CBS News Poll, 2/26/85).

President Reagan says he's acting because of Nicaragua's "Communist, totalitarian rule". But the U.S. gives active economic and military assistance to the Communist countries of Mozambique and China; we have a continuing trade relationship with Russia itself. "Totalitarian" should make us blush, given the atrocious human rights records of our staunch allies in Latin America: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The U.S.-supported Contras in Nicaragua have engaged in countless, well-documented atrocities against deliberately-selected civilian targets (see reverse). These people Reagan likens to our "founding fathers".

President Reagan also says his policies are designed to force Nicaragua to stop trying to subvert its neighbors. Yet even expert CIA agents assigned to the region admit that not a shred of evidence has ever appeared as proof that such subversion is happening, or even intended.

Reagan says he's punishing Nicaragua for its close ties to the Soviet Union. The United States has systematically denied all applications from Nicaragua for assistance. It has pressured the International Monetary Fund, the Organization of American States, and our European allies to deny all loans and aid. Nicaragua literally has had no other option than to turn Eastward for assistance.



Finally, Reagan says he wants to negotiate with the Sandinistas. Yet time and again the initiatives for dialogue have come from Nicaragua. So far the U.S. government has brushed off every one of these overtures.

As Nicaragua's Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, what Reagan's policy really amounts to is this: "Drop dead, or we'll kill you."

As U.S. citizens, it is up to us to force the government to listen to the 70% of us who oppose such injustice.

Many lives depend on us.

*"We have to repeat continuously, although it is a voice crying in the wilderness, NO to violence, YES to peace." Archbishop Romero
El Salvador*

SUPPORT the June 13 National protest against U.S. war on Nicaragua. Contact the Emergency Response Network at 771-1276.

WRITE or CALL your Congressmen to tell them you want the U.S. to respect Nicaragua's sovereignty. Alan Cranston: 45 Polk, San Francisco, 556-8440.
Pete Wilson: 450 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, 556-4307.

ORGANIZE a letter-writing campaign among your friends and co-workers.

CONTACT the following groups for information on upcoming events:

Emergency Response Network 771-1276

Witness for Peace 832-7302

Committee of Central American Refugees 528-8478

Guatemala News & Information Service 835-0810

Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador 861-0425

THIS IS NOT AN OPERA:

1. (woman) I believe we in Nicaragua have the right to redistribute the land fairly, so poor peasants can own the land they work on.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. SHE FALLS)
(voice) Zumilda Perez, twenty years old, was killed December 31st by U.S.-supported Contras. Five others were killed with her in the cooperative Lagartillo, including two 14-year old boys.
(MOURNING)
2. (man) I believe in our right to build schools in Nicaragua. The revolution brought the literacy campaign; but the Contras, when they come they target the teachers, and they try to destroy the schools.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. HE FALLS)
(voice) Roberto Melendez, a teacher in North Zelaya, was tortured to death by the Contras November 1st, 1984. His school was burned down.
(MOURNING)
3. (woman) Everything is going well for me and my husband. We're young, have land to till now, and soon we will have our first child. We're happy.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. SHE FALLS)
(voice) Concepción Sanchez Alvaro, 17 years old, was killed in a Contra attack at La Sorpresa. The U.S.-backed Contras cut the child from her womb with a bayonet, then shot her in the face.
(MOURNING)
4. (man) We are a religious people in Nicaragua. But my parents have been threatened by the Contras because they're religious leaders in our town, and they teach that God is the God of the poor, and so is with us.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. HE FALLS)
(voice) Tomás Lopez, 18 years old, was kidnapped January 23, 1985, from a civilian vehicle on its way to Estelí. The Contras tortured him to death, breaking his toes and fingers, pouring acid on his face, and piercing his arms with bayonets.
(MOURNING)
5. (man) The conditions in Guatemala are very bad, as bad or worse than in Nicaragua under Somosa. I have to spend six months of the year away from my family harvesting bananas for very low wages. The military has been killing people and burning crops near our village. They say we are revolutionaries. We are very afraid.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. HE FALLS)
(voice) Cupertino Xajil Balan was shot and killed by machine guns on February 12, 1985, while working with his brother on an estate near Escuintla, Guatemala. His brother was wounded and one other farmer was killed.
(MOURNING)
6. (woman) I left my job with the phone company to help bring in the coffee harvest. My parents are afraid, they say the Contras will try to keep us from harvesting. But they know how important it is.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. SHE FALLS)
(voice) December 31, 1984, a civilian truck carrying mostly telephone company workers was attacked by Contras on its way to San Jose del Rio Coco to help with the coffee harvest. Twenty-two people were killed, seven of them burned alive when the Contras set the truck on fire.
(MOURNING)
7. (man) I believe in our right to have health care in Nicaragua. I am an old man now, I've been sick for a long time; but only since the revolution am I able to get the medicine I need for my eyes.
(THE SOUNDS OF WAR. HE FALLS)

(voice) Adam Flores, 70 years old, was killed July 26, 1984, as he walked to the village of Taspale for medicine. Before he was killed, the U.S.-supported Contras tortured him; they castrated him, and scraped all the skin from his face.

(MOURNING)

[Documentation for all of the above attacks is available through Witness for Peace (P.O. Box 29497, Washington, DC 20017) and The Guatemalan News and Information Service (464 19th Street, Oakland, CA 94612).]

